

What does **TERM op TERM** mean?

It is pointless to give exact examples in many computing contexts, because the only meaningful use of the skill at issue begins when the learner starts making his or her own decisions about what do.

For this reason, instead of exact examples, computer documentation tends to give instructions with "fill in the blank" parts known as syntax diagrams.

=TERM op TERM is a typical example of a syntax diagram.

- if you type **=TERM op TERM** into a cell of your spreadsheet, letter for letter, you will get an error message
- instead, pick something that is legal (i.e. allowed, supported, acceptable) for the first TERM and type that
- then pick something that is legal for the op part and type that
- then pick something that is legal for the next TERM part and type that

Here are five legal examples of this sort of substitution process where TERM is always a number and op can be any one of + - / or * which are the symbols EXCEL uses for addition, subtraction, division and multiplication, respectively.

examples of legal substitutions for **=TERM op TERM**

```
=5-4  
=2*6.2  
=159685874637/6.345678  
=16+.000000008
```

You can keep going by adding addition **op TERM** pieces on the end. *(There is a practical limit to how many any given spreadsheet can process, but no theoretic limit and few users ever come near challenging the practical limit for most real life spreadsheet applications.)*

examples of legal substitutions for **=TERM [op TERM]...**

```
=5-4+12  
=2*6.2/19.5  
=159685874637/6.345678-1+4/5*100  
=16+8/.5+345-567*12345-98.876
```

Of course, if you want to force lower precedent operations to happen before higher precedent operations, need to put () around them just like in regular arithmetic.

examples of changing precedent using parentheses

```
=20-(4+12) produces a different result than =20-4+12  
=2*(8-2) produces a different result than =2*8-2
```



Experiment with constructing arithmetic formulas and using parenthesis to control the order of evaluation until you understand how to write formulas using simple numbers and arithmetic operators in EXCEL.